



STATE OF ARKANSAS FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES BOARD

March 10, 2015 Minutes



Meeting held at Arkansas Department of Emergency Management in North Little Rock, Arkansas.

Members Present:

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| o John Blackburn, AFC | o Shane Dallas, ASFFA | o Chad Mosby, APFF |
| o Larry Brewer, ASFFA | o David Dayringer, AAFC | o Rachel Nix, AFTA (ex officio) |
| o Stacey Caplener, AAFC | o JP Jordan, AAFC | o Tim Stuckey, AAFC |
| o Michael Cossey, APFF | o Rob Medford, APFF | o Jim Tolewitzke, ASFFA |

Members Absent:

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| o Tim Grimes, APFF | o David Kirkpatrick, ARVFA | o Jimmy Sullivent, ARVFA |
| o Chris Jones, ASFFA | o David Maxwell, ADEM (ex officio) | o Lindsey Williams, AFMO (ex officio) |

Reporting Guests:

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| o Kendell Snyder
ADEM State Fire Service Coordinator | o Mary Cameron
Bureau of Legislative Research | o Richard Drilling
Dept. of Finance & Administration |
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Meeting called to order by Chairman JP Jordan.

December 2014 Minutes

Motion to approve December 10, 2014 minutes as presented was made by Chad Mosby and seconded by Larry Brewer. Motion was approved.

Arkansas Department of Finance & Administration Report:

Richard Drilling of the Arkansas Department of Finance & Administration reported the DFA has not made any disbursements yet but will begin towards the end of the month. Any counties that changed their disbursement formula should report that soon. Changes can be made mid-year, but that complicates the process. The DFA is continuing the process to convert the Act 833 spreadsheet into a database.

Arkansas Department of Emergency Management Report:

Kendell Snyder, State Fire Service Coordinator, reported that 75-80 departments had been certified during the first quarter. There were approximately 250 departments pending that had not been certified due to the inclement winter weather. A site visit was made to the Aubry Fire Department in Lee County, which is a municipal department last certified in 2005. Three other site visits were postponed due to weather. Act 833 workshops were held in Van Buren and Lincoln Counties, which allowed certification of all departments at one time.

Coordinator Snyder reported that there is a department in Logan County under investigation for misuse of funds, which may include Act 833 funding. The department has been disbanded and the local prosecutor is handling the case. Additional information will be presented as it becomes available. The McNeil Rural Fire Department in Columbia County also experienced discrepancies in bank records and Act 833 carryover funds, which is being investigated by local prosecutor. A new fire chief has taken over and a new board is in place. They have local support and are receiving donations.

Arkansas Forestry Commission Report:

John Blackburn, Rural Fire Protection Administrator, presented his report on property and equipment acquired from federal surplus and distributed to fire departments in the state. Between December 2014 and February 2015, the Forestry Commission acquired four Freightliner trucks, 10 generators and 202 miscellaneous warehouse items.

with a total value of \$852,916. In that same time frame, the Commission provided nine Freightliner trucks, seven generators, six brush trucks, one box truck and one 2½-ton brush truck to fire departments. The property provided had a total value of \$1,406,550.

Administrator Blackburn reported that the Forestry Commission had taught 15 8-hour Wildland Fire courses, which included 350 firefighters from 126 fire departments. They also processed six interest-free loans to fire departments for a total amount of \$88,327. 10 Wildfire Suppression Kits were issued as part of the 2014 Volunteer Fire Assistance Grant Program.

Arkansas Fire Training Academy Report:

Rachel Nix, Arkansas Fire Training Academy Director, reported that inclement weather had forced classified staff home and created a backlog in the processing of some paperwork in Camden. The weather also caused the academy to have a makeshift graduation for the Winter I Firefighter Standards course. Director Nix said that when SAU-Tech closed, students were not allowed to travel between the dorm and campus for training. She will use this to support construction of a dorm on the AFTA campus. Tim Stuckey asked about enrollment numbers for Firefighter Standards. Director Nix stated they “weren’t too bad.”

Director Nix also reported that a new Chief Officer class had just begun. This program is funded by the federal government and coordinated by Charles Butler. The AFTA is currently averaging 3-4 IFSAC tests per week. The academy continues to receive positive feedback on the “Chapter Program” as it helps departments train towards Firefighter I & II in smaller blocks.

Unfinished Business:

UNIVERSAL REIMBURSEMENT FORM – No public comments have been received since the Board’s last meeting on the Uniform Fire Department Insurance Reimbursement Form. Following the close of the public comment period, a hearing will be scheduled with the appropriate legislative sub-committee. According to Mary Cameron of the Bureau of Legislative Research, Constitutional Amendment 1, which passed in November 2014, requires legislative review and approval of all changes to state agencies’ administrative rules. This may alter the time table for approval of the form. Additionally, Governor Asa Hutchinson’s officer has requested to see all rules before they are referred to the legislature for review.

New Business:

CERTIFICATION OF FIRE APPARATUS REPAIRS – Bob Franklin of Fire Apparatus Repair Company, Inc. submitted concerns via letter to Jim Tolewitzke about the licensure or certification of companies and repairmen providing fire apparatus service, testing and repair in the state. The Board discussed the need to educate fire chiefs and fire departments about what types of acceptance and service tests are required for fire apparatus. Director Nix stated that the AFTA has offered a basic fire chief class at the state convention and this information could be added to that curriculum. No action was taken by the Board.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE – The Board discussed each of the following items with no action taken:

1. SB 448 would provide a stipend of \$85 per day for AFPSB members conducting the business of the Board.
2. ACT 297 removes the requirements that a public employees’ designated beneficiary form must be notarized and updated annually. Tim Stuckey asked Coordinator Snyder to contact the Arkansas Claims Commission to determine the minimum requirements for this form. Shane Dallas stated the Firefighters Memorial Board would like to put together and distribute a form for this purpose.
3. HB 1618 would limit an employer’s ability to conduct a criminal background check on applicants for a position. Chad Mosby pointed out that Arkansas Crime Information Center (ACIC) rules prevent fire departments from using ACIC information as background checks.
4. HB 1638 is a shell bill for fire prevention.
5. HB 1158 applies to right for a lawful occupation and changes in licensing rules. The Arkansas Fire Marshal's Association is looking into this bill.

6. HB 1554 would change regulations regarding commercial cooking equipment in day care kitchens.
7. HB 1274 became Act 341 on March 6. This law offers a line of duty death benefit of up to \$150,000 to firefighters who meet certain requirements and die from a list of cancers determined to be job-related.
8. SB 149, which would require a candidate physical abilities test (CPAT) for certain firefighters, will likely die in committee. The Board briefly discussed the need for physical standards for firefighters. Secretary Michael Cossey stated that the AFPSB could mandate certain requirements for Firefighter Standards students without the CPAT bill. Jim Tolewitzke suggested including information about physical requirements in a fire academy welcome packet. Tim Stuckey suggested the academy could distribute a thumb drive with information to students accepted to Firefighter Standards.
9. HB 1210 became Act 106 on February 19. This Act allows cities to contract for fire service.
10. HB1194 became Act 79 on February 13. This Act clarifies that Insurance premium tax moneys are state moneys and are only pass-through moneys for county government not subject to county appropriation or county claims processes.
11. HB 1367 would allow rural fire departments to add fire dues to property taxes via a petition drive instead of having to pay for a special election.

Adjournment:

Tim Stuckey moved to adjourn the meeting. Rob Medford seconded the motion, which passed unanimously at 11:40 am.